

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY PLANNER**  
**SAMPLE OP-ED**  
**419 WORDS**

Don't depend on dumb luck  
this St. Patrick's Day.

Friends  
Don't Let  
Friends  
Drive Drunk.  
*Designate a Sober Driver.*

## **Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk This St. Patrick's Day**

*Don't Depend on Dumb Luck—Designate a Sober Driver Before the Party Begins*

In 2004, 48 percent of all traffic fatalities that occurred during the evening of St. Patrick's Day to the early hours of the following morning involved drivers with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) of .01 and higher. Of those fatalities, a vast majority were crashes where the driver's BAC was .08 or higher – the illegal limit in all states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This year, the risk may be even higher since St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated on a Friday night.

That's why **[Local Leader/Organization]** is joining forces with other federal, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials across the nation to remind all of those who plan on using alcohol during St. Patrick's Day festivities this year to act responsibly by designating their sober drivers before the parties begin.

St. Patrick's Day has become a big night out for many Americans—particularly among young adults. But it has also become a dangerous night out on our roadways due to impaired drivers. Whether meeting a few friends at the local pub after work or attending the **[big local parade/party]**, if you plan on using alcohol, never drive while impaired—and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired.

Designating a sober driver before the local celebration begins and making sure friends don't drive drunk are just two of several, simple steps to help avoid a crash or an arrest for impaired driving:

- Designate your sober driver before the party begins and give that person your car keys, and remember, *Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk*;

-- more --

- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- Use your community's Sober Rides program [**Insert your local Sober Rides specifics here**];
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement;
- Always buckle up—it's still your best defense against an impaired driver.

Impaired driving is no accident—nor is it a victimless crime. Overall in 2004, over 15,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .01 or higher. Of those, nearly 13,000 were in crashes where the BAC was .08 or higher.

Don't depend on dumb luck this St. Patrick's Day. Designate your sober driver before the party begins.

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